

null
Brooke F Adams 09/19/2006 11:20:00 AM From DB/Inbox: Brooke F Adams

Cable
Text:

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 00494

SIPDIS

CXCAIRO:

ACTION: RSO
INFO: POL IPS DCM

DISSEMINATION: RSO
CHARGE: PROG

VZCZCCRO875
PP RUEHEG
DE RUEHTRO #0494/01 2571258
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 141258Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1201
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0414
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0543
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 1361

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000494

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/NEA, DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/OPO/FPD, NEA/EX

E.O. 12958: DECL: 9/14/2016
TAGS: ASEC PTER LY
SUBJECT: EMBASSY TRIPOLI'S EAC IN RESPONSE TO ATTACK ON EMBASSY DAMASCUS

REF: N/A

CLASSIFIED BY: Ethan Goldrich, Charge', U.S. Embassy - Tripoli,
DoS.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (g)

¶11. (SBU) Charge' convened an EAC to discuss Embassy Tripoli's current security stance in light of the September 12 attack on Embassy Damascus, and last week's attack near Embassy Kabul. Present at the EAC were CDA(A), MGT, MED, DAO, RMAS, POL/ECON, Consular and the Acting RSO.

¶12. (S/NF) RMAS and RSO advised the EAC on the information that they received from open sources regarding the attack in Damascus. RMAS reported that they did not have any credible threats directed towards Libya.

¶13. (S/NF) The RSO discussed the current security posture at post. He briefed on a meeting he and Charge' held earlier in the day with RSO's security contact (Libyan External Security Organization (ESO) Col. Nuri Mokhtar) to discuss post's unresolved security issues. (Note: Since ESO has responsibilities for diplomatic security in Libya, RSO is compelled to interface with them rather than Libyan law enforcement entities on physical security matters. End Note.)

¶14. (S/NF) Below is the detailed list of the issues discussed at the EAC, in the earlier meeting on the 12th and over the past 24 months. (Several of the issues were raised again with ESO Director Musa Kusa in a September 13 meeting, see para. 5.)

(a) The Embassy's villa annex (housing RMAS, IRM classified commo, and DAO classified commo.) is 8 kilometers from the Embassy and is housed in a villa at the end of a street terminating in a cul-de-sac. Five months ago, the Embassy installed a drop-arm device that would restrict access and afford 30 meters of set-back. The drop-arm was initially

installed with an agreement from the ESO that it could be used and manned by Embassy staff. Once installed however, the ESO stated that neither Embassy staff, nor existing ESO guards at the site would be permitted to operate the drop bar. This vehicle barrier is currently in the "up" position leaving the annex vulnerable to a VBIED attack. Post and visiting delegations have repeatedly raised this problem since the drop arm's installation.

(b) Additional ESO/law enforcement support was requested for the annex and the Embassy (housed in the Corinthia Bab Africa Hotel). The hotel and annex currently have one ESO vehicle each allotted for protection. The RSO has pointed out that the vehicle at the Embassy is over 100 yards away and practically useless in the event of an attack, particularly a building over-run. More often than not, this vehicle has unarmed guards without radios. Note: RSO does not consider the ESO to be adequate in the counterattack realm. The organization lacks doctrine, training and equipment with regards to countering an attack. The vehicle placed at the annex is a small Toyota Corolla and, often but not always, has been used as a blocking vehicle directly underneath the open drop bar. We pointed out that the vehicle is a blocking vehicle is a poor alternative to the purpose-built drop-arm.

(c) The closure of two driveways in front of the hotel (to afford additional setback for the embassy) was requested. Based on commercial concerns, the hotel management has been hesitant to agree to initiate security measures in the hotel. The hotel currently has three driveways in front of the property. The first allows vehicles to park directly in front of the hotel while the second and third driveways are approximately 20 and 40 meters away from the hotel. Last year, the hotel was willing to close the entrance (but not the exit) end of the first driveway. Therefore, all three driveways remain open to vehicles and VBIED attack. We reminded ESO that within 100 feet of the glass-fronted lobby (well within the first and second drive-way) a small amount of TNT, or equivalent, would cause devastating damage to the lobby portion of the hotel.

(d) The Embassy is currently located on floors 5-8 in tower one of the hotel. An individual departing the common elevators can enter the Embassy with minimal restriction because for insurance reasons, the hotel requires that doors be kept open between the corridors and the elevator area. The Libyan government (GOL) had prohibited the Embassy from providing its guards with self-defense tools. Also, the ESO does little to restrict pedestrian entrance to the elevators. The RSO requested that all embassy doors be shut and a service elevator be blocked from reaching embassy floors. During a recent incident, a female EDP attempted to enter the embassy floors and speak with the Charge' and it took over twenty mintues to convince ESO to remove her. We explained to the ESO (and to the hotel management repeatedly over the past two years) that if the hallway doors were shut and locked, the embassy would have some security and access control. The RSO has also raised concerns that the hotel may be under surveillance.

(e) The ESO liaison officer's response to these requests were that they would "respond soon." This has been a common, oft heard response.

¶5. (S/NF) Charge' used a pre-existing September 14 meeting between visiting OBO Real Estate Director and External Security Organization Director Musa Kusa to raise the aforementioned security issues at a higher level. RMAS Chief and RSOwee also pesen. Kusa stated that he would review our requests. After expressing confidence that the Libyan authorities would never allow an attack to reach implementation, Kusa questioned the utility of the drop arm noting that while it would force a detonation further out toward the street, people would still die . He eventually allowed that if Libyans living behind the drop bar do not object, he will allow its operation. He asked ESO BG Muhammad Ajaj, to report back to him on our hotel-related requests.

¶6. (C) Charge also flagged our security concerns for MFA North America Director Mohammed Al-Ayyaib in a September 13 meeting.

The Embassy will continue to work with the Libyan authorities to address these security issues.

¶7. (S/NF) The EAC also discussed the on-going development of post's Emergency Action Plan along with our current personal security, especially driving practices. The need to vary routes and times of embassy vehicles including school buses was discussed. The EAC also reviewed its motor vehicle policy regarding transporting EFM's during emergency situations.

¶8. (S/NF) Without more specific and credible information, the EAC agreed, that the embassy would remain operational and would not curtail any of its upcoming events. The EAC proposed that a meeting with the director of the ESO be requested.

¶9. (SBU) Post will re-convene the EAC should new information arise.

BERRY
GOLDRICH